

JUDGMENT
ON
Alexander
AND
Cæsar;

And also on
*Seneca, Plutarch, and
Petronius.*

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JUDGMENT

UPON

Alexander and Caesar.

TIS a consent almost universal, That *Alexander* and *Caesar* have been the greatest men of the world; and all those who have concerned themselves to judg of them, have believed, they obliged Conquerors that have come after them, by finding some resemblance between their Reputation, and their Glory. *Plutarch* after having examined their Nature, their Actions, their Fortune; leaves to us a liberty of deciding, which he durst not take. *Montaigne* more

bold, has declared himself for the first; and since the versions of *Vangelas* and of *D' Ablancour* have made these *Hero's* the Object of all our Converse. Every one has taken part with the one or the other, according to his inclination or his fancy. For my part, who have possibly examined their lives, with as much curiosity as any one, I will not give my self the authority to judg absolutely. But if you will dispense with me, to tell you what I think; you shall have some Observations I have made of the agreement and difference I find:

They both had the advantage of great birth: *Alexander* the Son of a considerable King: *Cesar* of one of the chief Families of that Republick, whose Citizens esteemed themselves more than Kings. It seems, the Gods were willing to declare the future greatness of *Alexander*, by *Olympia's* dream, and

Alexander and Cæsar. 7

and several other presages : his own haughty inclinations from his infancy, his jealous tears for the glory of his Father, and the judgment of *Philip*, who believed him worthy of a greater Kingdom than his own, seconded the advertisement of the Gods. Many things of this Nature have been no less remarkable in *Cæsar* : *Sylla* saw in him (young as he then was) many *Marius*'s. He dream't that he lay with his Mother, which the *Augurs* interpreted, that the Earth, the Common Mother of all men, should be submitted to his power. He was known to weep, looking on the Statue of *Alexander*, that he had yet done nothing, in an age, wherein that Conqueror had made himself Master of the Universe.

The Love of Learning was a passion common to both : But *Alexander* every way ambitious, was touched with a jealousy of su-

periority in his studies; and his chief design for knowledg, was to be more knowing than others; witness his complaint, that *Aristotle* had published certain secrets, which should have been known to him alone; he declar'd, that he aspired to raise himself above other men, no less by Letters than Arms. Having a curious and passionate spirit, he pleased himself closely with hidden mysteries, and was particularly affected with Poetry.

There's none but have heard of the passions he had for *Homer*; and who is ignorant, that in favour of *Pindar*, the houses of his Descendants were saved in the ruin of *Thebes*, and general desolation of his Country.

The spirit of *Cæsar*, somewhat less vast, reduced Sciences to his use; and he seem'd, not to have loved learning but for its benefits. In the Philosophy of *Epicurus*,
which

which he preferred before all others, he principally applyed himself to what regarded man : but it appears, that Eloquence had his first endeavours, as knowing it necessary in the Commonwealth to arrive at the greatest things ; he pleaded in the *Rostra*, at the death of his Aunt *Julia*, with great applause ; he accused *Dolabella* ; and in the end made that excellent and delicate Oration for saving the lives of those Prisoners taken in *Catalines* Conspiracy.

There is left to us nothing that we can assuredly say was *Alexanders* ; unless some divine sayings, of an excellent and admirable composure, which leave with us an impression equal to the greatness of his Soul, and the vivacity of his Spirit.

But the greatest difference I find in their Sentiments, is, in the matter of Religion. For *Alexander* was devout, even to Superstition, suf-

fering himself to be led away by Augurs and Oracles; which, besides his natural inclination, may be attributed to his ordinary reading the Poets, who begot in men a fear of the Gods, and did indeed compose all the Theology of those times.

As for *Cæsar*, whether it were his temperament, or his having followed the Opinions of *Epicurus*, he pass'd to the other extremity. He expected nothing of the Gods in this life, and took little care what might happen in the other. *Lucan* represents him at the siege of *Murseillia* in a sacred Wood, with an Axe in his hand, where giving the first blow, he muted the Soldiers, (seized with a secret horror of Religion), by words sufficiently impious. *Salust* makes him say, That death is the end of all Evils, and that beyond it, there is neither care nor thought of Joy.

But

Alexander and *Cæsar*. 11

But men, how great soever they be, compared one with another are always feeble, defective, contrary to themselves, subject to error or ignorance. *Cæsar* was troubled at a dream which presaged him the Empire, and laugh'd at that of his Wife, which advertised him of his death. His life did very well correspond with his faith, 'tis true, 'twas moderated indifferently as to voluptuousness, but yet he denied himself no pleasure that he affected, which gave occasion to *Catullus* to make so many Epigrams of him; and was in fine the cause of that saying, *That Cæsar was the wife of all husbands, and the husband of all wives.*

In this case *Alexander* had great moderation, yet he was not insensible. *Barsinoe* and *Roxana* won his affection, nor had he so much continence, but that he made use
of

of *Bagoas*, whom *Darius* had used before.

The pleasure of feasting, so dear to *Alexander*, and wherein he sometimes suffered himself to be carried to excess, was indifferent to *Cæsar*. Not but that in the time of labour and action, *Alexander* was sober, and free from delicacy; but in time of repose, ease was irksome to him, unless he gave life to it by something spritely.

They were, both the one and the other, liberal in giving, even to profuseness; but *Cæsar* with more design and interest; his largesses to the people, his excessive expences in his *Ædilship*, his presents to *Curio*, were rather corruptions than true liberalities. *Alexander* gave to do good, out of the pure greatness of his Soul. When he went into *Asia*, he distributed all his desmeans, dis-furnished himself of all things, re-serving

reserving nothing but the hopes of conquest, or resolution to perish. When he beheld himself Master of the East, and had no more need of any person, he paid the debts of his whole Army. Painters, Engravers, Musicians, Poets, Philosophers, all indigent brave fellows had share in his Magnificence, and part in his Glory. Not that *Cæsar* was not likewise naturally very liberal, but in the design he had to raise himself, he was obliged to gain persons necessary; and scarce did he behold himself Master of the Empire, but it was unfortunately snatcht from him with his life.

I find not in *Cæsar* such friendships as *Alexander* had for *Ephesus*, nor such confidence as he had in *Craterus*. His intercourses were either strengthenings of his affairs, or a procedure sufficiently obliging, but much less passionate

nate for his friends. 'Tis true, his familiarity had nothing dangerous in it, and those who communicated it, need not fear, either his anger or caprichio's. Whereas *Alexander* was extream, either he was most obliging, or most terrible; nor was any one secure with a secret wherein himself was engaged. Notwithstanding, his friendship was his greatest passion next his glory; of which we need no other testimony than his own, when he cried out to *Achilles* Statue. *O Achilles! How happy wert thou to have so faithful a friend in thy life, and a Poet like Homer after thy death.*

Hitherto we have sought these two great men in their Natural qualifications, 'tis time to examine the Genius of Conquerors, and to consider them in all the extents of action. It is a kind of folly to reason of things only imaginary, nevertheless according to all appearance,

pearance, If *Alexander* had been in the place of *Cæsar*, he had only employed his great and admirable qualities to his ruin. It may be believed, that his haughty humour (enemy to precaution) would have difficulty secured him in the persecutions of *Sylla*; hardly could he have sought his safety by a voluntary withdrawing; as what he gave was out of a pure motion of liberality, his largesses would have been pernicious to him, instead of attaining the *Ædileship*, wherein magnificencies and profuseness were permitted; his gifts and presents out of season, would have made him suspected by the Senate; and 'tis very possible, he could not have subjected himself to Laws, which would have pinnioned a Soul so imperious as his; and so attempting something unseasonably, he had found the fate of the *Gracchi*, *Spurius*, *Manlius*, or *Cataline*,
but

but if *Alexander* would have lost himself in the Republick, *Cesar* whose Courage and Caution usually went hand in hand, had never conceived in his mind, - that vast design of the Conquest of *Asia*.

It is to be believed, that *Cesar*, whose conduct was so fine and close, that he was concerned in all the conspiracies, without being ever but once accused, and never convicted. Who in the divisions he stirr'd up amongst the *Gauls*, assisted one party to oppress the other, till he brought all under his Yoke. 'Tis to be believed, I say, that that very *Cesar* following his own Genius, would have settled his own Estate, brought under his Neighbours, and divided all the Republick of *Greece*, till he had fully subjugated them. For certainly, to leave *Macedon* without hopes of return; to leave Neighbours about him ill affected,
Greece

Greece indeed as it were submitting, but scarce settled in a subjection, and with Five and thirty thousand men, ^a Seventy Talents, few Provisions, to go to seek out the King of *Persia*, whom the *Græcians* called the great King, and whose single Lieutenants on the Frontiers made the whole world tremble ; is that which passes all imagination ; and seems somewhat more, than if in these days, the Republick of *Genova*, that of *Lucca* ; or *Rogusa*, should undertake the Conquest of *France*. If *Cæsar* had declared war against the great King ; it had been on the Frontiers, by little and little, nor would he have thought himself unhappy to have bounded his Eltates with the *Granick*, or if his Ambition had prest him farther, can you think he would have refused the offers of *Darius* ; he who daily offered peace to *Pompey*, or that he would not have

contented himself with his Daughter and five or six Provinces, which *Alexander*, 'tis possible, insolently refused? In short, if my conjectures be reasonable, he would never have gone into the plain Country, to have fought the King of *Persia*, accompanied with a Million of men; how brave, how constant soever he were, I question, whether he would have slept so profoundly, that night which preceded the battle of *Arbella*. I believe indeed, he would have been of *Parmenio's* mind, nor should we have had from him any of the answers of *Alexander*; yet it was necessary to undertake this unequal fight to become Master of *Asia*; otherwise *Darius* had drawn on the War from Province to Province during life. 'Twas of force that he perish as soon as he arrived, or that a thousand different people should see him overcome with all his forces.

'Tis

'Tis true, that this immoderate desire of glory, and too vast Ambition, which permitted him no repose, rendred him sometimes so insupportable to the *Macedonians*, that they were all ready to forsake him. But 'twas in that Juncture he particularly made appear the greatness of that Courage which nothing could astonish. *Go ingrateful wretches*, (said he to 'um), *go, and tell in your Country, that y^e have left Alexander with his Friends, labouring for the glory of Greece, among people who will obey him better than you.* There is nothing in all his life, which the Prince of——did more admire than this his fierce answer to the *Macedonians*, and this confidence in himself *Alexander* (said he), forsaken by his own, amongst *Barbarians* scarcely conquered, conceives himself so worthy to command, that he does not believe they can refuse to obey him. To

be in *Europe* or in *Asia*, amongst *Greeks* or *Persians*, is indifferent to him; he doubts not to find Subjects, where he can find Men.

But what is said for *Cæsar's* advantage, is, That the *Macedonians* had to deal with Nations soft and effeminate; and that the Conquest of the *Gauls*, whose people were fierce and warlike, was much more difficult to the *Romans*. I will not trouble my self to examine the Courages of the one, or the other; but it is certain, that *Cæsar* found not among the *Gauls* any true Armies, there were whole entire Bodies of people, even to the women, children, and old men, who tumultuously armed themselves for the defence of their liberty; multitudes who fought without order or discipline; and to speak truth, if you except twice or thrice, *Cæsar* might say, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, in all those occasions; which makes me believe, that if

Labiennus

Labiennus had commanded those Legions, he had no less subjected those Provinces to the Republick; whereas *Parmenio*, according to the best appearance, would not at all have fought that great Battle, which decided the affairs of *Asia*. You will likewise find this particular remarkable: *Parmenio* stood in need of *Alexanders* assistance in this fight; whereas *Cæsar* had one day been lost without *Labiennus*, who, having routed all on his side, sent the tenth Legion to disengage him.

But be it for the greater peril of their Enterprizes, for the exposing their Persons in them, or for being the less fortunate in doing so. *Alexander* was a hundred times in manifest danger of his life, and received often very great wounds. *Cæsar* truly had his hazards, but more rare, nor do I find him dangerously wounded in all his wars. Nor can I perceive, that the peo-

ple of *Asia* were so soft and effeminate, they who were always formidable to *Europe*. In the greatest power of the Commonwealth were not the *Romans* unfortunate against the *Parthians*, which composed but a part of *Darius* his Empire? *Crassus* perished with his Legions in the time of *Cæsar*; and soon after, *Anthony* made a shameful and unhappy voyage. As for Conquests, none can be truly attributed to *Cæsar*, but that of the *Gauls*; for in the civil war he reduced the Commonwealth with the best part of its own forces; and the single Battle of *Pharsalia* made him Master of an hundred different people, which others had vanquished. *Vespasian* cannot be said to have conquered the Empire, because he was declared Emperor upon the defeat of *Vitellius*; so *Cæsar* profited himself by the Labours of all the *Romans*, the *Scipio's*, *Æmillus's*, *Marcellus's*, *Marius's*,

rius's, *Sylla*, and *Pompey*, his own enemies fought for him, and all that was done in six hundred years, was the fruit of one hours fight.

But that which seems to me more incomprehensible of *Alexander*, is, that in twelve or thirteen years, he conquered more Countries, than the greatest Estates have done in the whole extent of their continuance : a Traveller is at this day famous, who has cross'd but a part of those Nations he subdued ; and that nothing might want to his happiness, he peaceably enjoy'd his Empire, even to the point of being adored by those he had overcome. In which I lament the misfortune of *Cæsar*, who could not give a form to the Estate of *Rome*, according to his designs ; being assassinated by those he was about to subject.

There yet remains one consideration to make, concerning *Alex-*

ander, That all the Captains of the *Macedonians* were great Kings after his death, who were but mean men compared to him during his life. And certainly, I pardon him in some sort, if in a Country where it was a received belief, that the most part of the Gods had their Families on Earth, where *Hercules* was believed the Son of *Jupiter*, for having killed a Lyon, or knocked some thief o'th head, I pardon him, I say, if seconding the opinion of *Philip*, who believed his wife to have commerce with a God, if deceived by the Oracles, if finding himself so much above all other men, he has sometimes despised his true birth, and sought for his Original in the Heavens; possibly, he caused this belief to be spread among the *Barbarians*, to draw from them the greater veneration. Though whilst he gave himself out to the world for a kind of a God; sleep, pleasure

fures with women, and the blood that distilled from his wounds, made him know, that he was but a man.

After having spoken so much in favour of *Alexander*, I will say in one word with *Cicero*, that for the beauty of an universal Genius, *Caesar* was in all things the chief of all *Romans*, Orator, Historian, in affairs of the Commonwealth, and in Employs of War. In truth the enterprises of *Alexander* have something more astonishing, but his Conduct and Capacity appear not to have the same Equality. His War in *Spain* against *Petreius* and *Afranius*, is a thing which people of the utmost experience yet admire. The most memorable Sieges of the later times have been formed after the manner of that of *Alexia*, and we owe to *Caesar*, our Forts, our Lines, and our Counter-vallations, and generally, all that which secures Armies before places.

For

For the vigor of it, the Battle of *Munda* was more sharply contested than any of those of *Asia*, and *Cæsar* ran as great hazard in *Egypt*, as *Alexander* did in the Town of the *Mallians*.

They were no less different in their procedure than in action. When *Cæsar* had not Justice on his side, he sought for appearances, and never wanted pretexts. *Alexander* would give the world no reason but his Will, he followed in all things his Ambition and his Humour, but *Cæsar* was guided by his interest or his reason.

There was scarce ever known a person of such evenness in his life, such moderation in his fortune and such clemency in injuries: those impetuosities which cost *Clitus* his life, those ill clear'd suspicions which caus'd the loss of *Philotas*, and which, to *Alexanders* shame, drew in train with it, as a necessary evil, the death of *Parmenio*,

menio, all these Eruptions were unknown to *Caesar* : Who could not be reproached with any death but his own, for that he took not care enough of his proper preservation.

It must therefore be acknowledged, that, far from being subject to the disorders of passion, he was the most active man of the World, and the least moved : great and little things found him still in the same posture, without appearing to be heightened by one, nor lor'd by the other.

Alexander was not properly in his own nature, unless in extreams. If he were to run, it must be with Kings ; if he were to hunt, it must be Lyons ; 'twas an affliction to him, to make a Present that was not worthy of him. Never was he more resolute, never more gay, then when his troops seemed discouraged ; never so full of confidence as in their despair. In a word,

word, he began to enjoy himself at that point, where other men, whether for fear or some other weakness, use to give themselves over; but his Soul, too exalted, did difficultly comply with the common course of life; and little careful of its self, it was to be fear'd, might take its flight in the midst of pleasure and repose.

Here I cannot forbear to make reflexion upon those *Hero's* whose Empire & Rule has so much sweetness in it, that it is no difficulty to obey; we cannot have for them those secret repugnances, nor those inward promptings to liberty which perplex us under a forced obedience; all that is within us is made supple and easie; yet what comes from them is sometimes insupportable. When they are our Masters by right of power, and so far above us by Merit, they think to have, as it were, a double Empire, which exacts a double

ble subjection; and it is a troublesome condition, to depend on men so great, that they may lawfully despise us. However, since there is no reigning in desarts and solitudes, and that there is a necessity of their conversing with us; it should methinks be their interest, to accommodate themselves to our weakness; and we should reverence them like gods, if they they would be content to live with us like men.

But let us finish this discourse, which becomes toilsome to my self, and say, that by all practicable ways, *Cæsar* hath done the greatest things, and made himself chief of all the *Romans*.

Alexander was naturally above all men; and you may say, that he was born Master of the Universe, and that in all his Expeditions, he went less to fight with his enemies than to make himself known to his Subjects.

JUDG-

JUDGMENT

O N

*Seneca, Plutarch, and
Petronius.*

I Will begin with *Seneca*, and tell you, with an extremity of impudence, That I have a greater esteem for his Person than his Works. I honour the Master of *Nero*, the Lover of *Agrippina*, and that *Ambition* which pretended to the Empire ; but for the *Philosopher* and the *Writer*, I have a very slender value ; and am neither affected with his *Stile*, nor his conceptions. His *Latine* has nothing in it, like that of *Augustus*

stus his time, nothing that's easie, nothing that's natural; full of points, full of imaginations that breathe forth more of the heat of *Affrica* or *Spain*, than the flame of *Greece* or *Italy*. You will find there things cut in two, which have the air and method of sentences, but have neither the solidity, nor good sense, which thrust and press upon the mind, without gaining the judgment. The continued violence of his discourse does as it were affright me; and the Soul, instead of finding satisfaction and content, meets with nothing but melancholy and perplexity.

Nero, who though one of the wickedst Princes living, was a person of a great deal of wit; had ever about him, a sort of fine spruce delicate little Masters, who treated *Seneca* like a Pedant, and endeavoured to make a Fop of him. But I am not of the opinion of *Bervillus*, who thinks the false

Eumol-

Eumolphus in *Petronius* was the true *Seneca*. If *Petronius* would have given him an injurious Character, he would rather have personated him under a Pedant Philosopher, than an impertinent Poet; besides it is almost impossible to find any resemblance of humor in it. *Seneca* was the richest man of the Empire, yet always praised poverty: *Eumolphus* was a Poet very low, and almost in despair with his condition, continually complaining of the Ingratitude of the Age, and for his sole comfort applying, that *bonæ mentis soror est paupertas*. If *Seneca* had vices, he was precise to cover them under the cloak of Wisdom. *Eumolphus* boasted of his, and lived in the world like a Libertine.

I cannot therefore perceive on what *Bervillus* grounded his conjecture. But I am deceived, if all that *Petronius* speaks of his time,

of the corruption of Eloquence and of Poesy ; if *Controversia sententiales vibrantibus Picæ*, which troubled him so much ; if *vannus sententiarum strepitus*, at which he was astonish'd, hinted not at *Seneca*. If the *per ambages & deorum Ministeria*, &c. was not meant of *Lucans Pharsalia*. If the praises he gives to *Cicero*, *Virgil*, and *Horace*, were not designed to lessen both the Uncle and the Nephew. However it be, to return to my opinion of this Philosopher, I never could peruse his writings without finding an aversion to those principles wherewith he would inspire his readers. If he endeavour to perswade Poverty, I dye with a desire of Riches ; his Virtue makes me afraid ; and the least vicious, would abandon themselves to pleasures, on the description he makes of it. In short, he talks so much of death, and wearies me

me with such dismal *Idea's*, that I do all I can, not to profit by reading him. That which I find most praise-worthy in his works, are the Examples and Quotations wherewith he adorns them. For he living in a very delicate Court, and knowing a thousand fine stories of all times, has brought in very pleasant ones, sometimes of the *Greeks*, sometimes of *Cæsar*, of *Augustus*, of *Mecænas*. For after all this, he had abundance of wit, and an infinite knowledg, but his stile hath nothing in it agreeable to me, and his opinions are too crabbed; and 'tis ridiculous, that a man who enjoyed an excess of riches, and preserved himself with such mighty care, should preach nothing but *poverty* and *death*.

Montaigne has found out a great agreement between *Plutarch* and *Seneca*; both great Philosophers,

36 *Judgment on Seneca,*
both Preachers of Wisdom and
Virtue, both Masters of *Roman*
Emperors; the one richer and
greater in the world, the other
more happy in the education of
his Pupil. The opinions of *Plu-*
tarch (as says the same *Mon-*
taigne) are sweeter and better ac-
commodated to society. Those
of *Seneca*, according to his opi-
nion, more strong and firm, but ac-
cording to mine, more rugged and
austere. *Plutarch* does sweetly
insinuate Wisdom, and would
make his Virtue familiar even in
pleasures themselves. *Seneca* re-
duces all pleasure under Wisdom,
and makes only the Philosopher
happy. *Plutarch*, of his own Na-
ture virtuous, and first perswaded,
easily perswades others. The Spi-
rit of *Seneca* aims and animates it
self towards Virtue, and as if
it were a thing strange to him,
'tis necessary he first surmount it.

As

As for *Plutarch's* stile, not having any knowledg of the *Greek*; I cannot give you any assured Judgment, or pass my Sentence concerning it; but I must needs say, that amongst his *Morals*, there is a great deal I cannot at all comprehend, whether it be by reason of the difference of things and manners in his time and ours, or that they are truly above my little capacity: the familiar *Dæmon* of *Socrates*, the Creation of the Soul, and the course of the Moon, may be admirable to those that understand them. I must confess, I cannot find out their excellencies; and if they be wonderful, 'tis a wonder beyond my reach. We may judg by the good words of the ancients which he hath left us, by those sayings left by him, and those gathered together with so much diligence, by the long discourses at table, how sensible he

was of conversation, and yet there was either little delicacy in those days, or his palat was none of the most exquisite; he sustains grave and serious matters with a vast proportion of sense and reason, but on things depending purely on wit, there is nothing either ingenious or delicate.

To say truth, the lives of the Illustrious men, are *Plutarchs* Masterpiece, and in my judgment one of the finest Works of the world; you may there see those great persons exposed to view, and yet retired within themselves; you may see them in the purity of Nature, and in all the extents of Action; One may behold the constancy of *Brutus*, and his fierce answer to the evil Genius that spoke to him; one may perceive, that *maugre* himself, there yet remained some impressiou of that Fantasm which all the reasoning of *Cassius* could hardly

hardly efface ; a few days after you may see him ordering his Troops, and giving Battle, so happy on his side, and so unfortunate by the error of *Cassius* ; you may behold him re-attempting his fortune, losing the fight, reproaching virtue, and finding more succour in his despair, than from that ungrateful Mistress he had so long faithfully served.

There is a natural force in all his discourse, which equals the greatest action, and of him only it may properly be said, *Facta dictis exaequata sunt* ; yet he forgets not the mean nor common things, but with diligence examines the ordinary course of the life.

For his Comparisons, which *Montaigne* hath found so admirable, they appear indeed to me very polite ; but I think, he might have exceeded them, and pierced farther into the depths of their

Nature. There are windings and turnings in our Souls, which have escaped him ; he hath given judgment of man too much in the gross, and has not believed him so different as he is from himself, wicked, virtuous, just, unjust, merciful, cruel ; and where man seems to be-ly himself, he attributes it to stranger causes. In short, had he been to define *Cataline*, he had given him us, either Covetous or Prodigal ; that *alieni appetens, sui profusus*, was above his knowledg, and he could never have unravelled these contraries which *Salust* has so well separated, and which *Montaigne* himself much better understood.

To judg of the merit of *Petronius*, I would have perused what *Tacitus* says, and without lying, he must be one of the most honest men of the world, since he could oblige so severe an Historian, to
renounce

renounce his Nature, and enlarge himself in the praises of a voluptuous person ; not but that so exquisite a voluptuousness contributed as much to the delicacy of the spirit, as to that of the taste. That *Erudito Luxu*, that *arbiter Elegantiarum*, is the character of an ingenious politeness, much different from the grosser conceptions of the vicious : Nor was he so given over to his pleasure, as to become incapable of affairs ; neither had the sweetness of his life made him an enemy to business. He retained the merit of a Governour in his Government of *Bythinia*, and the virtue of a Consul in his Consulate ; but instead of subjecting himself to his dignity, as do most part of men, fetching thence all their perplexity, or all their joys ; *Petronius*, with a spirit superior to his charges, reduced them to himself ; and to explain my self better,

ter, according to *Montaigne*, he renounced not the Man in favour of the Magistrate.

For his death, after having well examined it, either I am deceived, or it was the most exemplary of all antiquity. In that of *Cato*, I find melancholy, and some anger; his despair of the affairs of the Commonwealth, the loss of his Liberty, the hate of *Cæsar*, were great assistants of his resolution; and I know not whether his natural fierceness, did not almost reach to fury, when he tore out his own bowels. *Socrates* indeed died like a wise man, and with indifference enough; however, he sought to assure himself of his condition in the other world; was continually reasoning with his friends in the prison; & to say all in a word, Death was to him a very considerable Object. *Petronius* only found a sweetness and unconcernment in
his

Plutarch and Petronius. 43

his *Andiebat referentes nihil de immortalitate animæ, & Philosophorum placitis. Sed levia carmina & faciles versus.* He not only continued his ordinary functions, to give liberty to his slaves, to cause others to be punished, but suffered himself to be transported to any thing that might delight him; and his Soul, at the point of so troublesome a separation, was more affected with the sweetness and facility of Verse, than all the sayings of Philosophers. *Petronius* at his death only left an image of life; no action, no word, no circumstance betray'd any trouble of a dying man; of him may properly be said, that *dying is to cease to live*, and to him the *Vixit* of the *Romans* justly appertains.

ON

O N
PETRONIUS.

I Am not of their opinion, who believe, that *Petronius* intended to reprove the vices of the times; or to compose a Satyr with the same design wherewith *Horace* writ his. I am deceived, or good manners were not so much obliged to him. 'Tis rather a delicate Courtier, who finds it ridiculous, that a Pedant should become the publick Censurer, and undertake to blame the corruption of the times. And to speak truth, if *Petronius* would have left us an ingenious moral of the description of Sensualists, he had endeavoured

red to give us some disgust, but 'tis in this, that vice appears with all the graces of the Author ; 'tis in this, that he sets forth with more excellency the acuteness and politeness of his spirit.

Moreover, if he had a design to instruct us by a way more fine and intricate than that of Precept, we should at least see an example of divine or human justice upon some one of his Debauches : but so it happens, that the only good man, which he introduces, the poor *Lycas*, an honest faithfull Merchant, fearing the gods, perishes miserably in the tempest, in the midst of those Varlets which are preserved. *Encolpius* and *Giton* bind themselves to one another, that they may dye in the straiter embraces, and death dares not disturb their pleasure. The voluptuous *Triphena* saves her self in a skiff with all her baggage. *Eumol-*
phus

phus was so little moved with the danger, that he had the leisure to make some Epigrams. *Lycas*, the pious *Lycas*, in vain invokes the gods for their assistance, and, to the shame of their providence, is the only innocent swallowed up among so many guilty. If we see sometimes *Encolpion* melancholy and grieved, his grief is not the effect of his repentance; he has murdered his Host, is a fugitive, there is no sort or manner of crime that he has not committed, yet thanks to a good Conscience, he lives without remorse; his tears, his sorrows proceed from a very different cause; he laments the unfaithfulness of *Giton*, who has forsaken him, and despairs to imagine he may be in the embraces of another, who laughs at the solitude to which he is reduced.

Jacent!

*Jacent nunc amatores Obligati
noctibus totis ; & forsitan,
mutuis libidinibus attriti de-
rident solitudinem meam.*

All crimes ever succeeded happily to him, only one, which in truth brought upon him a very severe punishment ; yet this was a sin to which, neither divine nor human Laws had allotted any chastisement ; he had too faintly answered the caresses of *Carce* ; and the plain truth is, this fumbling is the only fault that ever afflicted him ; he acknowledges he has many times err'd, but never deserved death but in this occasion. In fine, not to tye my self to the order of the History, he relapses again into the same crime, and receives the deserved punishment with a perfect resignation ; 'tis now that he begins to consider with himself,
and

and feels the Anger of the gods.

*Hellspontiaci sequitur gravis Ira
Priapi.*

He laments the sad and miserable estate into which he is fallen :

*Funerata est pars illa corporis,
qua quondam Achilles eram.*

And to recover his former vigor, he puts himself into the hands of a Priestess of that Gods, with most excellent reflections on Religion, but in effect, the only ones that ever proceeded from him in all his adventures.

I could tell you likewise, that the good man *Eumolpus* is ——— by little boys, when he recites his Verses; but when he corrupts his Scholar, the Mother treats him as a Philosopher, and though they lye in the same Chamber, the Father

ther sleeps dogs-sleep. So much is the buffoon severely punished in *Petronius*, and vice happily protected. Judge by this, if virtue had not need of another Orator to persuade it. I believe, he was of the opinion of——

That an honest man and good manners agree not together.

Si ergo Petronium adimus, adimus virum ingenio vero aulico, Elegantiæ arbitrum, non Sapientiæ.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

IT's not to be doubted, that *Petronius* designs, to describe the debauches of *Nero*; and that that Prince was the principal object of his *Satyricon*. But to know, if the persons which he introduces are true or feigned, if he give us Characters according to his own fancy, or else describes the proper Nature of certain people; is a thing very hard, and which in reason we cannot assure our selves of. I believe for my part, that there is no one person in *Petronius*, that can generally agree with *Nero*. Under *Trimalchio*, he apparently derides his ridiculous Magnificence, and the extravagancy of his Pleasures. *Eu-molpus* represents to us the fool-

ish passion he had for the *Theater*.

Sub nominibus exoletorum, feminarumque & novitate cujusque stupri; Flagitia Principis perscripsit.

And by an agreeable disposition of different imagined persons he touches divers impertinencies of the Emperors, and the ordinary disorder of his life.

It may be said, that *Petronius* is very contrary to himself, to blame the sumptuousness of a Feast, and the delicacy and softness of other pleasures; he that was so diligent and ingenious an Inquirer after voluptuousness!

Dum nihil amœnum & molle affinentia putat nisi quod ei Petronius approbavisset.

For

For to speak truth, though that Prince was in his own nature sufficiently corrupt, yet according to *Plutarch's* judgment, the complaisance of this Courtier contributed very much to throw him into all manner of Luxury and Profuseness. In this, as well as in most things of History, we must regard the difference of times.

Before that Nero gave himself over to this strange kind of looseness, there was no person in the world, so agreeable to him as *Petronius*; insomuch, that every thing passed for gross and dull that had not his approbation. This Court was like a School of pleasure, or Inquisition of voluptuousness; where every thing was fitted to the delicacy of so exquisite a palat. I believe likewise, that the

politeness of our Author, became pernicious to the publick, and that he was one of the principal causes of the ruin of several considerable persons, who made a particular profession of Wisdom and Virtue. He was continually preaching Liberality to that Emperor who was already a Prodigal ; softness, to one given over to sensuality ; what ever had but an appearance of Austerity, seem'd to him fond and ridiculous. If my conjectures be right, *Traseas* had his turn, *Helvidius* his, and whoever had merit without the art to please, was troublesome at his own cost.

In this sort of life, *Nero* grew every day more and more corrupt ; and as the delicacy of the pleasure began to yeild to the disorder of the debauch, he fell into extravagancies beyond
all

all bounds, and into an utter disorder of mind. 'Twas then that *Tigellius*, jealous of the parts and favour of *Petronius*, and those advantages he had over him in the skill of contriving pleasures, endeavoured to ruin him, *Quasi adversus amulam & scientiæ voluptatem potiozem*. Nor was it any difficult matter for him to do; for the Emperor, absolutely given over as he was, could not suffer so curious a witness of his infamies; he was less tormented with remorse for his Crimes, than with a secret shame, which his gross debauches threw upon him, when he remembered the sweetness and delicacy of his former delights. *Petronius* on his side, was not without his disgusts; and I am of the mind, that in the time of those concealed discontents, he composed that ingenious *Satyricon*,

which we unhappily have but imperfect.

We may see in *Tacitus*, the occasion of his disgrace, and how soon after *Piso's* Conspiracy, the Friendship of *Severinus*, was the pretence of his fall.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

P*etronius* is through his whole writings to be admired for the purity of his style, and the excellency of his conception; but that which most of all surprizes me, is the great facility wherewith he does ingeniously give us all sorts of Characters. *Terence* is possibly the Author of *Antiquity*, which dives best into the nature of persons. Yet I can find this to say against him, that he is too much confin'd, and all his talent is bounded, in putting fit words into the mouths of servants, and old men, a covetous father, a debauched son, a slave, or a kind of Pick-pocket, behold at once the utmost extent of *Terence* his capacity : expect
not

not from him, either the gallantry, or passion, or conceptions, or discourse of an honest man.

Petronius, with an universal spirit, finds the genius of all sorts of professions, and forms, as he pleases, a thousand different natures; if he introduces a Declamer, he manages so well his air and his stile, that you would say he had Declamed all his life. Nothing in the world can better express the disorders of a debauched life, than the quarrels of *Encolpius* and *Acyltor*, about the matter of *Giton*.

Does not *Quartilla* represent admirably those prostituted women?

Quarum sic accensa libido, ut sapius peterent viros. quam peterentur?

Does

Does not the marriage of little *Giton* and the innocent *Pannichris* give us the perfect image of an accomplished unchastity.

All that a Fop could do ridiculously, at a magnificent Banquet, a counterfeit gallant, and an impertinent; you have represented to the life, at the feast of *Trimalchio*.

Eumolpus shews us *Nero's* folly on the Theater, and his vanity, to recite his own works; and you may observe, in passing over so many curious verses, of which he makes a debauched use, that an excellent Poet is ordinarily no very honest man. And by the by, as *Encolpion* representing *Eumolpus*, for a Poet dogril, and maker of fantastick verses; yet forbears not to find in his Physiognomy, something
of

of Great ; you may perceive, he observes judiciously not to ruin those Idea's he had given us.

That distemper he has , to compose out of due season, even *in vicinia mortis* , his volubility to tell his compositions in all places , answer to his ridiculous aim :

Et ego, inquit, Poeta sum, & ut spero non humillimi spiritus, si modo aliquid Coronis credendum est, quas etiam ad imperitos graves deferre solet.

His knowledg general enough, his extraordinary actions, his expedients in misfortunes, his constancy to help his companions in *Lycas* his ship ; that pleasant Court of searchers for successions, which he brings together in *Crotona* , have still an accord with those things

things which *Encolpius* had promised :

*Senex Canus Exercitati vultus, &
qui videbatur magnum aliquid
promittere.*

There is nothing so natural, as the personating of *Crisis* ; all our Confidants come not neer it ; and without speaking of her first conversation with *Polienos*, that which she says of her Mistrels, upon the affront which she had received, with an inimitable quickness and propriety :

*Verum enim fatendum est, ex qua
bora accipit injuriam, apud se
non est.*

Whoever has read *Juvenal*, knows very well, *impotentiam Matronarum*, and their wicked humour, *Si quando vir aut familiaris*

liaris infelicius cum ipsis rem habuerat, but there is no body but *Petronius* could describe *Circe* so fair, so sensual, and so gallant.

Enothea, the Priestess of *Priapus*, ravishes me with the Miracles which she promises, with her Enchantments, her Sacrifices, her mourning for the death of the sacred Goose, and the manner how she was comforted ; when *Polienos* made her a present, with which she might buy a Goose, and gods too, it she thought fit.

Philumena, that honest Lady, is no less pleasant, who when she had devoured many Estates in the flower of her youth and beauty, being become old and consequently useless for pleasure, endeavoured to continue her excellent art by the means of her Children, which with a thousand
fine

fine discourses she introduces to old folks which had none. In short, there is neither nature nor profession, the genius of which *Petronius* does not admirably follow ; he is a Poet, an Orator, a Philosopher when he pleases.

For his verses, I find in them a pleasing force, and a natural beauty. *Naturali pulchritudine carmen exsurgit*. So that *Donza* could no longer endure the fire and tempest of *Lucan*, when he read the taking of *Troy*, or that little Essay of the War of *Pharsalia*, which he declares to love much better,

*Quam trecenta Cordubensis illius
Pharsalicorum versuum Voluvina.*

I know not whether I am deceived, but in my mind, *Lucretius* hath not so aptly discoursed
the

the mater of dreams, as *Petronius*.

Somina, quæ mentis ludunt volitan-
tibus umbris,
Non delubra Deum, nec ab æthere
numina mittunt,
Sed sibi quisque facit; nam cum
prostrata sopore,
Urget membra quies, & mens sine
pondere ludit;
Quicquid Luce fuit, Tenebris agit
oppida bello
Qui Quatit & flammis miseran-
das sævit in urbes;
Tela videt: &c.

And what can one compare to that voluptuous night, the representation of which so fills the Soul, that there is need of more than a little virtue; to contain within those simple expressions it makes upon the spirit.

Qualis

*Qualis nox fuit illa! Dii, Deae-
que,
Quam mollis Thorus! Hæsimus Ca-
lentes,
Et transfudimus hinc & hinc la-
bellis,
Errantes animas. Valet cura!
Mortalis ego sic perire cæpi:*

What a night, O good gods!
What warmth! What kisses!
What breathings! What mix-
ture of Souls in those hot and a-
morous respirations!

Though the style of a Declamer
seems ridiculous to *Petronius*, yet
he forbears not to shew a great
deal of Eloquence in his Decla-
mations; and to make it appear,
that the most debauched are not
incapable of meditation and re-
turn; Morality has nothing more
serious, nor better applied than
the reflections of *Encolpius* on the

E

incon-

inconstancy of human things, and the uncertainty of death.

What ever subject presents it self, it is impossible either to think more delicately concerning it, or to express it more lively. Oftentimes in his Narrations, he proceeds no farther than the simple nature, and contents himself with the naked graces, sometimes he puts his last hand to the work, and when he pleases, there's nothing dishonest, nothing hard. *Catullus* and *Martial* treated on the same things grossly, but if any one could find out the secret to clothe smutty things in language like his, I will answer for the Ladies, that they would praise his discretion.

But that which *Petronius* is more particular in, is, that besides *Horace* in some Odes, he is possi-

possibly the only person of antiquity, that has known how to speak of Gallantry. *Virgil* is touching in the passions; the loves of *Dido*, the loves of *Orpheus*, and *Euridice*, have charm and tenderness, but there is nothing gallant; and the poor *Dido*, such a charitable good Soul she was, became amorous of *Aeneas* upon the recital of his misfortunes. *Ovid* is witty and easie. *Tibullus* delicate. Yet it behoved all their Mistresses to be more learned than my Lady——whilst they bring in the gods, fables, examples drawn from the farthest antiquity. They are still promising Sacrifices, and I believe Mr.—— took from them the manner of burning hearts in Holocaust. *Lucian*, as ingenious as he was, becomes dull when he talks of love, and makes his Gallants discourse rather in the language

of the Country, than Court.

For my part, though I am a great admirer of the Ancients, I cannot forbear to render justice to our own Nation, and do certainly believe, that we have over them a great advantage in this point; and without lying, after having well examined the matter, I know none of those great Genius's, that could make *Massinissa*, *Sophonisha*, *Cæsar*, and *Cleopatra*, speak so gallantly of love as we have heard them speak in our language; but as much as others yeild to us, *Petronius* exceeds us. There is no *Roman* can furnish us with so agreeable a story as the Matron of *Ephesus*. Nothing so gallant as the love-Epistles of *Circe* and *Polienos*; and all their adventure, whether in the entertainments, or in the description, has a Character much
above

above all the politeness of our age. Judg then, how delicately he would have treated a just passion, when this was only the business of two persons, who at first sight were to come to the last enjoyments.

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The Matron of *Ephesus*, according to *Petronius*.

There was a certain Lady at *Ephesus*, in so great reputation for Chastity, that even the women of neighbouring Nations came to see her as a wonder; this excellent woman, when her husband was to be carried to sepulture, was not content, according to custom, to attend his corps, with dishevelled hair, and to beat her naked breast in the sight of the people, but would follow his beloved body to its monument, and when it was after the Greek manner placed

ced in the Sepulcher, would become a Guard to it ; and began whole nights and days to weep over it : from thus afflicting her self, and seeking her own death, neither her friends nor neighbours could withdraw her ; the Magistrates at last, finding both their power and prayers repulsed, left her ; and every one deplored this woman of so singular an Example, who had now past the fifth day without sustenance. There accompanied her a faithful Handmaid, who with her tears assisted her mourning, and as often as the light placed in the Monument began to fail renewed it. She now was grown the talk of the whole Town ; and all sorts of people confessed her to be the only rare exemplar of true Love and Chastity. When it hapned, that the Governour of the Country having caused certain Thieves to
be

be crucified neer the place where this Lady thus consumed her self over the body of her dead Husband; the next night after, a Soldier who had the guard of the Crosses, lest any should give the bodies burial, took notice of a light within the Monument, and heard certain mournful voices; and Curiosity, that vice of Mankind, made him desirous to know who or what it was; going therefore into the Monument, he espied a wonderful fair Lady, and stood astonished, and took it at first for an Apparition; but when he beheld the dead body, and considered the tears, and saw the lacerated countenance, he soon conceived what it might be, and that the dead object had made the other careless of living; he then brought his Supper into the Monument, and began to exhort the dying Lady, not to afflict her self
with

with so vain a mourning, and with a grief that could bring no benefit, that we must all dye, and all go to the same home, and many such like things wherewith we use to reduce minds overcharged with sorrow; but she obstinate to all consolation, rent more violently her breasts, and tearing off her hair, strowed it on the bosom of her dead Husband. Yet would not the Soldier be so repulsed, but with fresh exhortations, began to perswade her to eat; till the Maid corrupted with the sent of the Wine, first reach'd out her vanquish'd hand to the humanity of the Inviter; and being enlivened with meat and drink, began to combat her Ladies obstinacy; and what will it profit you, said she, thus to consume your self? why will you bury your self alive? or why will you render you spirit to the Fates before they ask it?

Think

*Think you the gods do for our ashes
care?*

Will all your mournings give light to what the Fates have extinguished? why will you not rather renounce this womanly error, and enjoy life while you may? that very dead body lying there, should admonish you, to live. There's none do unwillingly give ear, when they are compelled either to eat or live. The Lady wearied with several days abstinence, permits her resolution to be broken, and with the same desire which before had vanquished her Maid, falls to, and eats; you might guess the rest, who know the effects of human satiety. With the same allurements wherewith the Soldier had perswaded the Matron to live, with the same he assaults her Chastity. The young
man

man appeared to her neither deformed, nor of unpleasant discourse; and the Maid was assistant with her counsel:

*Will you (said she) a pleasing love
disdain?*

*Think how you are restor'd to life
again.*

Why should I prolong my story? Neither in this case could the woman preserve her vow'd abstinence; the Soldier becomes Victor both ways: they therefore lay together, not only that night in which they made their close and sudden Nuptials, but likewise the following, and the third day; shutting up the entrance of the Tomb, that both known, or unknown, which passed that way, believed this Mirror of Chastity to be expired on the body of her dead Husband. The
Soldier

Soldier in the mean time, delighted as well with the womans excellent beauty, as the secret of the adventure, bought all necessaries, as far as his slender means would go, and every night brought them to the Monument. But whilst he thus enjoyed his love, some of the friends of one of the crucified persons, perceiving the guard neglected, took down the body and pay'd it the last Rites; which when the Soldier the next day found himself thus rob'd off, and beheld one of the Crosses without a body, he runs to his woman, bitterly complaining, and tells her, the like punishment was to be inflicted upon him; nor would he stay the Judges sentence, but with his own Sword do justice upon himself for his neglect. So that now she was like to behold in the same fatal Sepulcher, the dead bodies of her Husband and her

her Gallant ; but the woman was as merciful as she was chaste. The gods forbid, said she, that I should at once behold the Funerals of two men whom I held so dear ; I had rather hang up the dead than kill the living ; and accordingly she bids him take the body of her dead Husband out of the Coffin, and hang it on the Cross that wanted one, the Souldier steads himself of the ingenuity of this prudent woman ; and the next day, all the Town admired, how a dead body could creep to the Cross.

FINIS.

